



BACI E-NEWS

Building Active Communities Initiative

FALL 2015

Special Healthy Communities Issue

This special issue of the BACI E-News is dedicated to all Montanans working to make their communities healthier and more vibrant places to live, work, learn and play. On October 27-28, 2015, 230 people gathered in Helena, MT from across the state and the nation for the *Montana Healthy Communities Conference*. The purpose of this conference was to: bring together professionals from the community development and health and human services fields to address "upstream" factors that influence health (e.g., affordable housing, fresh produce, safe places to be active, quality early child care, good jobs, etc.); share national and local successes; and discuss next steps for collaborative action back home. Future BACI E-News will provide updates on what comes from this powerful gathering.

One way that we are bringing multi-sector partners together to build healthier communities is through the *Building Active Communities Initiative (BACI)*. For this special issue I have included a brief background section along with an update from our BACI communities. This newsletter will also showcase new initiatives, resources, and upcoming events that relate to healthy communities.

BACI: Background

The goal of the BACI project is to train and provide technical assistance to local multi-sector leadership teams to enable the creation of safer, more accessible and inviting places for all residents and visitors of all abilities to be active (i.e., walking or biking to school, work or errands; taking transit; playing in a local park, etc.). Sixteen Montana communities have participated in our yearly BACI Action Institutes where they learn from national experts and from each other to develop strategies to make their communities more active and vibrant places to live.



Montana Healthy Communities Conference

2015 American Public Health Association Conference (APHA)



APHA centers conference around a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach (see page 3)



U.S. Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities (p 3)

2015 BACI Updates

We have more success stories from BACI teams across the state. The City of Red Lodge was awarded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the Department of Commerce to help fund an Active Transportation Plan for their community. The City of Whitefish just released an RFP to hire a consultant to update their Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The Hardin BACI team created a *River Valley Farmer's Market* and located it right downtown to draw people to their central core and begin a discussion about the downtown streetscape. The City of Havre has drafted a Complete Streets Ordinance (the first ordinance in Montana) and is working to gain input and support from stakeholders in order to finalize the policy. Park County has just completed a draft of their countywide Active Transportation Plan and has held five public meetings to gain input from their communities.



Downtown Red Lodge

New Mobility West, a project of the Sonoran Institute, held a technical assistance workshop in Butte (a 2013 BACI community) to help community leadership and citizens better understand how the West Park corridor between Uptown Butte and Montana Tech could be made safer (including all modes of transportation), more attractive and more economically vibrant.

Kalispell (2013 BACI community) was successful in securing a [\\$10 million TIGER grant](#) from the US Department of Transportation for downtown revitalization efforts.



Park County is in the public comment phase for their countywide Active Transportation Plan.

New Resources and Initiatives and Save the Dates!

There are several new resources available to support the work of multi-sector leadership teams in building safe, active and vibrant communities. Please click on the titles to link to more information.

[Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities](#): On September 9th U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy announced “Step It Up!” a Call to Action focused specifically on what individuals, communities and governments can do to make physical activity a priority for people of all ages and abilities. The Call to Action features five strategic goals: 1. making walking a national priority, 2. designing communities that are safe and easy to walk, 3. promoting programs and policies to support walking throughout the day, 4. providing information to encourage walking and improve walkability and 5. filling gaps in surveillance, research and evaluation related to walking and walkability.

[EPA’s Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities](#): is a compilation of strategies, organized by 11 “goal areas,” that villages, towns, and small cities can use to evaluate their existing policies to create healthy, environmentally resilient, and economically robust places. The tool focuses on issues that are unique to rural areas while acknowledging that rural communities are diverse.

[Safer Streets, Stronger Economies](#): In a study of 37 projects, Smart Growth America’s National Complete Streets Coalition found that Complete Streets projects tended to improve safety for everyone, increased biking and walking, were remarkably affordable and were related to broader economic gains like increased employment and higher property taxes.

[The Benefits of Street-Scale Features for Walking and Biking](#): Through a partnership between the American Planning Association and Active Living Research, this project examines how different street features (including sidewalks, bicycle facilities, traffic calming, crossing aids, etc.), either independently or in combination with one another, can promote physical activity. The research also explores other potential co-benefits to such features, with special focus on economic and social outcomes.

[Health in All Policies—A Guide for State and Local Governments](#): Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas. The goal of Health in All Policies is to ensure that all decision-makers are informed about the health consequences of various policy options during the policy development process.

[The Built Environment Assessment Tool Manual](#): measures the core features and qualities of the built environment that affect health, especially walking, biking, and other types of physical activity.

The core features assessed in the BE Tool include: 1. Built environment infrastructure—such as road types, curb cuts and ramps, intersections and crosswalks, traffic control, and public transportation. 2. Walkability—for example, access to safe, attractive sidewalks and paths with inviting features. 3. Bikeability—such as the presence of bike lane or bike path features. 4. Recreational sites and structures. 5. Food environment—such as access to grocery stores, convenience stores, and farmers markets.

[Save the Date](#): BACI Action Institute 2.0, March 22-24, 2016 for more information see [BACI website](#)

Bike Walk Montana Summit April 27-29, 2016 for more information see [Bike Walk Montana](#)

Our Team

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The Building Active Communities Initiative (BACI) is a project of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services' Nutrition and Physical Activity Program (NAPA) in partnership with Montana State University's Office of Rural Health and Bike Walk Montana.

The goal of BACI is to create or enhance community environments so that people of all ages, abilities and income levels can safely walk, bike or take public transportation to places they need to go.



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